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ABSTRACT

A project was undertaken to create a community of caring, interdependent, intrinsically motivated learners among 21 freshmen students in a community college preservice teacher preparation seminar. Interviews with students at the beginning of the seminar had revealed that most viewed the classroom as individualistic, competitive, and threatening and that all students disagreed with the top-down hierarchical structure. Methods used to create the learning community included allowing students autonomy regarding covering the student syllabus; setting a schedule for student-instructor contacts outside of class for informal discussions, tutoring, and feedback; forming a student advisory committee to create a strong peer culture that perceived teaching as a shared enterprise; and developing collegiality and social skills through cooperative learning groups. To gauge student responses and the level of community formed, students were asked to keep journals and structured, open question interviews were conducted with all 21 students in the 12th session. Analysis of journals in the 6th and 12th sessions indicated that 6 out of 7 students recognized the transformation of the seminar into a community of learners. Similarly, journal entries and interviews revealed that all students felt empowered by the two-way communication system between themselves and the college through the advisory committee and instructor. A self-evaluation instrument, the syllabus, a reflection rubric, and a social skills checklist are appended. (KP)

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ED 381 216

Improving the Freshman College Classroom Through Building a Purposeful Community of Altruistic and Motivated Learners

by

Carol Cohen

Cluster 60

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Carol Cohen under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University

Approved:

Apr. 13, 1995

Date of Final Approval of Report

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I gratefully acknowledge and thank the many encouragers, taskmasters, praisers, and gatekeepers who have moved a person such as me, who functions somewhat on the edge, to act on my dreams. To Nova Southeastern University faculty; Dr. William Anderson, my adviser; Broward Community College EDF 1003 freshmen seminar students; Marge Marcus, a cluster friend; Dr. Suzanne Kinzer, Director of the Teacher Education Alliance; Drs. Gloria Moss and Trudy Jermanovich, coworkers; Jerry, my loving husband and support system for 35 years; and my very special children and grandchildren, I dedicate this poem to show my sincere appreciation:

Act on your dreams.....
Within each of us there is a hidden creative self;
Lucky are those who discover it.

Act on your dreams.....
Meet all roadblocks head on;
The end successes are uplifting.

Act on your dreams.....
Believe in yourself along the shaky path
Even though others may question your direction.

Act on your dreams.....
For realities emerge
from outrageous ideas.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Freshman College Classroom Through Building a purposeful Community of Altruistic and Motivated Learners. Cohen, Carol, S., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Higher Education/College Instruction/College Students/ Community of Learners/Classroom Environment/Cooperative Learning/Altruism/Teacher Student Relationship and Attitudes

This practicum was designed to bring a group of college freshmen together as a purposeful community of learners characterized by shared values and beliefs, caring and helpful behaviors, a sense of belonging, synergy, and authentic intellectual challenges. The 21 students entered the postsecondary classroom scripted by 13 years of traditional teaching and learning which fostered control, competition, individualism, and isolation, rather than autonomy, cooperation, interdependence, and altruism.

The writer, through a multidimensional approach, nurtured a paradigm shift to a more "familylike" classroom where learning was intrinsically motivated. Strategies focused on increasing student autonomy through choice and visioning, fostering warm teacher-student relationships through formal and informal interaction, improving communication through cross-cohort events and Advisory/Sunshine Committee, and developing collegiality and social skills through cooperative learning groups.

Analysis of the data revealed that the freshman college classroom was transformed into a place where quality learning and warm, caring relationships were common and strived for. Both teacher's and students' commitment to each other and a collective vision created an environment where community, social responsibility, and academic engagement improved.

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Carol S. Cohen
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

This practicum was implemented at one of the sites of a tri-campus community college. The students involved are freshmen and are part of an experimental preservice teacher preparation program which is not included in the regular college preparatory program offered at the institution. Classes frequently take place off campus making the larger community part of the learning environment. Since the program is selective in nature and draws from high school graduates within a tri-county area, the fact that the college is located in a middle class suburban neighborhood in southeastern Florida does not offer much information about the socio-economic backgrounds of the students. The students come from a variety of different neighborhoods and from families with even more diverse incomes although the average is $35,000. There is no on-campus housing, and all commute to school. Scholarships, grants, and part or full-time jobs provide the resources for supporting the students through college. The norm is to work anywhere from 20 to 40 hours a week leaving little time for school related matters and studying. The common denominator for the students in the program is the fact that all want to become teachers and will do whatever is necessary to get there. For some, this

means breaking out of environments which are dysfunctional and wrought with many social problems.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is a joint appointment in a tri-institutional education Alliance between a public school system, community college, and university. Experimental in nature and sanctioned by the state, it has as its mission to train teachers for urban environments of the 21st Century. Upon entering the program, the students are clustered for two years at the community college and two years at the university; and except for electives, take a specially developed curriculum.

The writer teaches several different education seminars at both the college and university levels. The one constant teaching assignment is the entering freshman survey education seminar, and these students were used in the practicum. The class consisted of 21 students: 18 female, 3 male; 11 Caucasian, 1 American Indian, 5 Black (2 Haitian, 3 Afro American), 4 Hispanic; 16 elementary or early childhood majors, 5 secondary majors. It is difficult to attract faculty from the college and university who are willing to make a paradigm shift and model some of the newer teaching methods and strategies. Even among those who have come on board, most use lecture style, are frustrated over students' poor academic performance, and have limited collegial interaction with the joint appointment seminar

instructors. Besides the regular seminar teaching assignments, the writer facilitates the program's implementation, serves as liaison between the three institutions, helps recruit new students, works with mentor teachers, coordinates the high school Exploratory Teaching component, develops curriculum, and conducts staff development activities.

The makeup of the program is unique. There are 75 mentors who play an important role in coaching the students from the many different cohorts: High School Exploratory Teaching Cohort with approximately 400 students; Community College Freshman Cohort with 21 students, Sophomore Cohort with 20 students, and Paraprofessional Cohort with six students; and University Junior Cohort with nine students. The "true" experimental pilot program begins at the high school, moves through the community college, continues at the university in the College of Education, and ends with a promise of a job in the county public school system. The incoming freshmen must not only meet the entrance requirements of the community college, but must also fulfill the guidelines of the program which include a 3.0 non-adjusted high school GPA, a minimum grade of "B" in Algebra II, and three letters of recommendation. The applications are screened by a committee of representatives from all three institutions who are seeking to attract the very best into the program and teaching profession. Our motto has

changed the usual perspective of "Those who can't, teach; those who can, do something else." to "Those who can, teach; those who can't, do something else."

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The 21 students in the writer's freshman class, who comprised the practicum population, were not bonded to each other by a shared purpose or set of values. The classroom atmosphere was one in which the students had their own agendas and sought to manipulate the environment so that personal needs were paramount to that of the needs of others. Peer interaction was at a minimum with the students showing little or no interest in each others' lives, in working together, or in being helpful and caring. Intellectual challenges were rarely met with enthusiasm and were engaged in only because they were required by the course curriculum and were needed for advancement to the next step.

The "I" mindset prevailed over the "we." The college freshman seminar class was not a community of caring, interdependent, intrinsically motivated learners.

Problem Documentation

Evidence that the freshman college class was not a community of learners was supported in many ways. Student interviews after a few weeks into the semester revealed that 21 out of 21 students believed college classrooms were by nature controlling, threatening, individualistic, and

competitive. The students spoke of feeling intimidated and insecure in relation to asking or answering class questions or initiating conversation with others who were unfamiliar.

Dissatisfaction with the top-down decision-making process of the pilot program was reported by 21 out of 21 students during a "buzz" session. The freshmen recounted experiencing a loss of a sense of autonomy as decisions were being made by the program executives without any student input and threatened to leave if changes were not forthcoming. A request was asked of the writer to act as liaison and bring these concerns to the director.

Personal observation pinpointed anti-community behaviors among the majority of the students in both the academic and social arenas. Several came to the surface when the writer tried to institute a new practice for grading. The students were to have as many times as necessary to use peer and instructor feedback to produce a work of quality. A negative reaction occurred which was symptomatic of a scarcity mentality belief that there was not enough room for all to succeed. The students' focus was on grades rather than on content and pride in the work. A disinterest in one's own learning as well as that of others was exhibited. The paradigm seemed to be get the task done as quickly as possible, get a grade, and throw away the product. All fellow classmates were considered enemies in the competition for the "A"s. During interactive learning

tasks, the writer noted that collegiality and collaboration were overshadowed by a utilitarian perspective; interactions were impersonal with little initiative to form new friendships; cliques based on previous high school relationships or cultural identity evolved; a low tolerance for the viewpoints of others was exhibited; and poor listening and communicating skills were practiced.

Student complaints about feeling a lack of "connectedness" to the program and college itself were received on the average of two per class session for the first few weeks of the semester and were measured for decrease during the first two months of the practicum implementation. The students' reactions to such dissatisfaction included dropping out of the program, requests for permission to take classes outside of the established plan, and petitions to the director to have cohort classes opened to outsiders.

Causative Analysis

The many disparate causes of the problem emanated from a previous authoritarian learning history, program and institutional features, and past classroom practices. Prior to entering college, the students spent much of the previous 13 years of schooling in traditional classrooms. The teacher directed and controlled all aspects of the learning environment. A carrot and stick philosophy had the students jumping through the hoops to get the carrots. Warm

student-teacher relationships were not valued, nor were they encouraged. Although a paradigm shift would have improved the writer's classroom environment, the students seemed comfortable having somebody else responsible for their learning. The students, except for a few, favored keeping things at status quo rather than handling the discomfort associated with change.

The tri-institutional cohort and experimental makeup of the program had frustrated the efforts of building a shared sense of culture intra-cohort, inter-cohorts, or with the regular college population. Each cluster functioned as a mini-program within the context of the larger one and had its own continuum of courses, group of instructors, schedule (day and night classes), and meeting site (on and off campus). The general college population was locked out of the program courses. As a result, students did not have occasions to meet informally with members of other cohorts or the general college population. Although such interaction was not naturally occurring, no effort was put forth on the part of the program to bring it about. Additionally, all institutional decisions were non-negotiable. Since a formal avenue did not exist for bridging the gap between the students and the bureaucracy, there was no student "buy in" to the system. At the beginning of the semester, when the class schedule and other decisions were posted, factions evolved based upon personal

self-interest. Many vendettas continued beyond the first seminar session. Additionally, the students were all commuters who rushed to part or full-time jobs or home to their families after classes. Under these circumstances, socializing after hours was not a priority. In an attempt to keep the plan simple and workable, the institutions had prevented the class from becoming a cohesive group.

After years of schooling based on an individualized, competitive, put-down model which emphasized rewards and the WIN-LOSE paradigm, the students had carried these behaviors over into the writer's classroom. Difficulty arose whenever collaboration, collegiality, and intrinsic motivation were needed to solve a problem. The leadership and prosocial skills required to bring about the desired effects were lacking in the students since there had been no instruction from previous teachers in this area. Furthermore, the students had incorporated the anti-community behaviors into the repertoire of their habits, and habits were hard to break.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There has been a resurgence of interest in and writings about the problem. Several authors view building a community of learners within the classroom as the panacea for overcoming the ills of today's society. Brandt (1992) emphasizes the pressing need to restructure our classrooms to resemble communities of generous, caring, interested,

cooperative learners because of a breakdown in society's efforts to work together for the common good. Sergiovanni (1994) agrees that in our dysfunctional society, traditional classroom practices which value individualism, self-interest, control, personal pleasure, competition, impersonal relationships, and extrinsic involvement must be replaced by the elements inherent in community. Kohn (1993b) adds that teachers must take the students beyond just becoming lifelong learners and also pay attention to developing them into decent people. Community drives the learning process, and it is the basis for bringing students and teachers together in caring, trusting, collaborative relationships. In the process, they are moved toward becoming actively engaged learners and encouragers (Peterson, 1993). The writer believes that what the literature suggests is not a utopian situation, and that college students are very capable of discovering their brighter sides.

Classrooms fall along a continuum of community according to how learners, learning, and authority are perceived--a classroom of silence where knowledge is learned for a grade and students are dependent on extrinsic motivation and an authority figure; a classroom of subjective knowledge where knowledge is personal and individual and is valued as such by the group; a classroom

of procedural knowledge where knowledge is based on interactions with others and procedures which encourage it; a classroom of constructed knowledge where meaning is constructed both subjectively and objectively (Peterson, 1993). The writer's classroom, by student choice and not teacher design, was somewhere between a classroom of silence and a classroom of subjective knowledge. The students were resistant to change, but the writer hoped to facilitate the process which would lead to a classroom of constructed knowledge.

Practices within the schools are perpetuating anti-community behavior. The effects of rewards on community have been studied by many authors. Kohn (1993b) opposes the "Pop Behaviorism" philosophy which attaches a reward to a particular performance or behavior. Such rewards, he states, foster unequal status by emphasizing competition, individualism, extrinsic motivation, fear, and teacher pleasing behaviors. Kohn (1993b) further suggests that grades undermine cooperation and excellence and set up hostile environments. Other authors focus on the effects of praise. Praise is a form of reward and at the college level, it impairs skilled performance (Butler, cited in Kohn, 1993b), reduces achievement (Baumeister, cited in Kohn, 1993b), and may be perceived as condescending and controlling (Deci, cited in Kohn, 1993b). Policy of the

community college, which had not been waived for the program participants, required that a letter grade be given for each course. This was a fact of life that both the writer and students had to live with, but it did not have to drive the learning process, as was the case. Few students in the classroom truly experienced the joy of learning. Most had an other-directed orientation which made the extrinsic reward more important than striving for quality or pride in work.

The ways that controlling environments have impacted learning have also been studied. Such environments lead to anxiety, helplessness, poor performance, fear, reduced exploration (Boggiano, cited in Kohn, 1993b), and less ability to think for oneself and assume responsibility for learning (Davis & McKnight, cited in Kohn, 1993b). Tiberius and Billson (1991) argue that unilateral teacher or institutional authority structures negatively impact learner responsibility and social climate by interfering with group cohesion, perpetuating adversarial relationships, and decreasing personal relationships, motivation, dialogue, and self-direction. Lecturing and preaching are also controlling devices in that they prevent students from creating meaning from their own experiences and make them think that they aren't capable of doing it (Kohn, 1993b). The students came to the writer's doorstep unready to learn

in an environment that would shake up many beliefs which they held. Practices which would make the classroom more holistic were frowned upon. What the writer believed would be embraced was rejected. The traditional "chalk and talk" method of teaching and learning was the only thing known to the students, and that was what the expectation was for. Anything different was considered less worthy.

Externally imposed policies which are not arrived at through shared decision making stunt the growth of democratic classrooms (Sergiovanni, 1994). Likewise, Zhixin (1989) found in his study of colleges that peer culture does not develop among teacher candidates due to the individualistic and competitive nature of teaching, lack of shared vision and philosophy between faculty and student, reduction in peer contact when at different sites during interning, personal and work obligations, and commuting aspect which interferes with team building efforts. Guskey (1988) contends that community colleges are characterized by both ineffective learners and instructors. Intrinsically motivated and self-actualized students and positive learning environments where self-esteem, interdependence, and active student participation take place are at a minimum in the classroom. Life for the freshmen students was a hurried one. Important, but urgent events precipitated a crisis orientation. Trying to balance school and work was physically, emotionally, and psychologically draining. The

end result was that neither was done well, success was not achieved, and self-actualization suffered.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum. When the practicum is complete, the classroom will be a purposeful community characterized by altruism, a sense of belonging, synergy, learning that is valued, and authentic intellectual challenges. The classroom will be a secure base which will foster the emotional health and well-being of everyone in it through relationships which are caring, supportive, and encouraging. Being able to talk together, work together, achieve together, and "sink or swim" together will be considered by the students to be an antecedent to becoming highly effective individuals.

Expected Outcomes

1. Interviews and journal entries will show that five out of seven students believe that a college classroom may be "family-like" where learning is a shared enterprise based upon mutual understandings and principles, honesty and trust, collegiality, unconditional acceptance, and opportunities to fail "safely."

2. Interviews and journal entries will reflect that 21 out of 21 students have had representation and input on matters affecting their cohort such as scheduling and curriculum.

3. During on-the-spot, structured observations, two out of three students: will demonstrate an abundance mentality and be supportive of others in their learning; will be inner-directed learners; will be empathic listeners and genuine and honest communicators; will be respectful, culturally aware, and open to the viewpoints of others; will come from a WIN-WIN perspective; will know the basic attitudes and behaviors of cooperation, teamwork, social responsibility, and friendship.

4. No more than two complaints every month, for the first two months of the practicum implementation, will be received by the director about a lack of a strong peer culture existing among teacher candidates in the different cohorts or the absence of a sense of belonging.

Measurement of Outcomes

Journals will be kept by the students, and entries for seminar class sessions and out-of-class meetings and events will be required. The journal is already used by the teacher preservice preparation program as a component of the portfolio assessment and adopting it to the needs of this practicum provides an opportunity not only to evaluate outcomes, but to train the freshmen for their role as reflective practitioners. The students' reflections will focus on at least one of the following categories which have been adapted from the Anderson/Fordham Self-Evaluation of

Participation (see Appendix A): Attendance and Promptness, Community Building & Contribution to Learning Environment, Contribution to Class Discussion, Listening, Sensitivity to Others, Commitment to Learning Process, and Growth in Group Process Skills. In addition, any representation and input on matters affecting the cohort will be noted. The journals will be collected and checked at the sixth and twelfth seminar sessions. Five out of seven students will show an awareness of the transformation of the classroom into a "family-like" community. Twenty-one out of 21 students will respond throughout the journal that they have had fair representation at the institutional level into matters affecting their cohort.

A structured, open question, interview using the indirect approach will be given during the twelfth session in order to determine the students' attitudes toward life in the seminar classroom, in particular and in the preservice teacher education program, in general. The interview method has been selected to allow for elaboration of an answer, branching out in new directions of inquiry if necessary, and determining the strength of attitudes. The questions will relate to the items spelled out in Outcome #1 and Outcome #2. Once again, five out of seven students will show an awareness of the transformation of the classroom into a "family-like" community. Twenty-one out of 21 students will

respond that they have had fair representation at the institutional level into matters affecting their cohort.

The writer will conduct ongoing, on-the-spot, structured observations of the students in order to determine the presence or absence and frequency of specific social and prosocial behaviors delineated in Outcome #3. The seminar class provides ample opportunity to observe in a natural setting and to determine if the occurances of the behavior under scrutiny are fairly common. The observations will be five minutes in length, and the results will be recorded on a checklist. Two out of three students will demonstrate the social and prosocial behaviors being observed.

At the end of the second month of the practicum period, the writer will review the records of student complaints to the director in reference to dissatisfaction with the program. Records, in any regard, provide objective and credible data; and in this case, a structured system of collection will not put extra demands on anyone. No more than two complaints every month, within the two month period, will be received bemoaning the fact that there is a lack of a strong peer culture among all teacher candidates in the different cohorts (Outcome #4).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The literature proposes a variety of solutions for solving the problem of a classroom which is not a community of caring, interdependent, intrinsically motivated learners. It emphasizes setting up a classroom atmosphere that is "of the children, by the children, and for the children." Choice and shared decision-making create opportunities for individuals to grow socially, emotionally, and morally. Kohn (1993a) suggests that choice for students about all matters affecting their classroom leads to a self-determination which transforms disinterested learners into actively engaged ones. Gordon (cited in Kohn, 1993b) accepts the need for rules and limits, but advocates adults and kids share in the responsibility for setting them. Sergiovanni (1994) speaks of inventing community through practices which create an atmosphere of shared identity, shared setting, and shared goals and principles. When decisions are shared, bonding and a new sense of purpose and control result. Experiencing altruism authentically is more apt to encourage children to include its virtues of facilitative communication, prosocial attitudes, and self-directed learning into their behavior (Kohn, 1993b). Creating a shared vision and mission, states Covey (1989) involves people in ways which lead to commitment, identity,

and continuous improvement. Peterson (1993) believes that building a community is assisted by moving the student from passive "doer" to active planner, thereby increasing leadership and personal knowledge.

Teachers play an important role as socializing agents for students. Students desire to have open and honest relationships with teachers which are based on mutual respect and unconditional acceptance and belonging (Sergiovanni, 1994). Zhixin's (1989) study provides evidence that warm, caring, personalized, and informal interactions between faculty and students in preservice teacher education programs positively affect the program's success and the attitudes and beliefs of both parties. Spady (cited in Guskey, 1988) concurs that formal and informal, classroom and non-classroom contacts between student and teacher impact both academic and personal outcomes. It opens up avenues for advising, feedback, tutoring, discussions, and conversations. The degree to which teachers "walk the walk" and "talk the talk" and genuinely develop friendly, nurturing and sincere interactions with students, warns Kohn (1991), will either make or break a classroom community.

Cooperative learning has positive effects on both cognitive and affective outcomes. Kohn (1993b) and Kagan (1992) recognize the ability of cooperative learning to bring about an environment where caring,,sharing, teamwork,

excellence, and quality are all valued. Sapon-Shevin and Schniedewind (1990) and Kagan (1992) make the point that as the cooperative learning model impacts community building within the classroom and schools, the values of society will inevitably be positively affected. Wittmer (1992) states that classrooms are small multicultural societies with interpersonal and cultural barriers to good communication which is the foundation for the humane treatment of others. Slavin (1990) and Costa (cited in Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991) elaborate outcomes other than academic achievement and altruism which are the direct result of cooperative learning practices--improved attendance, peer and racial relationships, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, prosocial skills, and creativity.

Social skills and facilitative communication development are necessary components of a cooperative learning model if a paradigm shift from competition to collaboration is to be successful. Wittmer (1992) sees effective communication leading to such positive outcomes as new friendships, tolerance, patience, mutual understandings, and cultural sensitivity. None of these outcomes will happen without specific teaching methodology moving it along so that the behaviors can be learned, practiced, and monitored (Bellanca, 1991; Kagan, 1992; & Schultz, 1989-90).

Cooperative learning has a place in the classroom and specifically in teacher preparation programs. Rau and

Heyl's (1990) study of cooperative learning groups in their college classrooms concluded that it is a strategy that has both task and social-emotional benefits--improved group identity, sense of purpose, and principled behavior. Other studies showed that cooperative learning in teacher education programs affords the students both the opportunity to simultaneously learn the strategies and to practice the skills (listening, communicating, shared decision-making, etc.) in group situations in order to build group participation and collegiality with peers (Glass & Putnum, 1988-89; Nattiv, Winitzky, & Drickey, 1991).

Group projects encourage individuals to become interdependent, unconditionally accept each other, and construct meaning and knowledge. Getting students involved in something of worth reinforces many skills needed in a community of learners--caring relationships, conversation and dialogue, leadership, creative thinking, and self and peer evaluation (Peterson, 1993). Projects may be simple and merely class or school level, but Sergiovanni (1994) suggests the use of larger service projects as a strategy for confirming oneself as valuable, for providing a venue for demonstrating altruistic virtues, and for lifting individuals to quality performance.

The social life of a community is an important factor in establishing solidarity. Zhixin (1989) suggested that gaps between students in teacher education programs could be

closed through cohort and cross-cohort participation in after-class group gatherings set up for making new friendships, having fun, tutoring and mentoring, role modeling, and reflective thinking. Peterson (1993) points out the importance of ceremony, ritual, rite, celebration, play, conversation, parading, and dialogue in pulling together and keeping together members of a community. Guskey (1988) strongly supports the use of peer tutoring and study teams as a means for fostering positive student interactions and a spirit of oneness.

Preservice teacher preparation programs must embody a philosophy of community in both theory and practice if the K-12 classrooms are ever to become communities of committed, caring, motivated, interdependent learners. The issue becomes ever more pressing when one accepts the premise that teachers will teach the way they have been taught. The writer had a large degree of autonomy over what took place within the classroom setting. There were, however, prescribed program outcomes which had to be adhered to and a syllabus previously designed by the writer and approved by the college curriculum committee which needed to be followed. Even within these constraints, most of the solutions addressed by the research fell within the writer's sphere of influence.

The literature is filled with the idea that learning is social and that building a community of learners is

connected to a classroom atmosphere that gives students choice and intellectual autonomy and encourages warm student-teacher relationships. Implementing this solution means changing the role of the instructor from "sage on the stage" to "guide on the side;" from transactional manager to transformational leader; from external controller to intrinsic motivator; and from one who stands apart to one who gets personally involved. This solution which encumbers the use of shared decision-making, leadership training, and a restructuring of teacher-student interactions was an attractive one for the writer. As a teacher of the gifted for eighteen years, the writer practiced an interactive style of classroom teaching, making it easier to move away from the traditional college lecture style previously used. No special equipment was needed for implementation, and the success of this solution strictly depended upon the writer's ability to build trust and respect with the students. Having gone through training in both the shared decision-making model as a member of a school improvement team and Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, the writer not only philosophically believed in the processes, but could rely on the strategies learned for making the experiences one of quality for the students.

There are many proponents of the idea that if students are to learn the skill of choice and deal with the freedom associated with it, the opportunity for making real choices

must be made available. It is not a matter of whether rules and regulations are needed, but rather who generates them. The experts suggest that those at the top need to give up power in order to enable students to become self-managers and self-regulatory. Student governments and advisory councils are recommended in the literature as avenues for empowering those at the "grass roots" level. A Student Advisory Council, which cuts across cohorts, was a solution that was possible within the writer's setting. As the students were brought in on the decision-making process classroom level, their input at a higher level could also be taking place. The writer's program director at one time, after receiving many student complaints, suggested forming such a council, but never acted upon it. The writer had received permission from the three institutions involved in the preservice teacher program to get a council up and running. It was hoped that the proactive behaviors of the freshmen students, based upon knowledge and practice of good leadership skills, would make them leaders in the council and would pave the way for closing the gap between the bureaucracy and the students it served.

Synergy, one-on-one interactions, individual and group accountability, and the appropriate use of social, leadership, and facilitative communication skills are all components of cooperative learning. The literature states that when used in a classroom, the model helps to drive the

environment away from competitive and individualistic styles of learning toward a more altruistic, "family-like" atmosphere. Reference is made to the fact that as responsibility for each others learning is shared, psychological, emotional, and social attitudes are impacted in a positive way. The more authentic and meaningful the projects and problems worked on by the groups, the greater the chance the desired social, thinking, and feeling behaviors will occur. These outcomes fit right into the picture the writer had painted for the freshman class. Thus, the cooperative learning model was one which supported the purpose of the practicum. Implementing cooperative learning requires the teacher to have knowledge of certain procedures. The writer had been through the training and had used the strategies in staff development workshops and in previous teaching experiences with gifted elementary students. Once again, the only resources necessary were a teacher with the "know how," and students who "buy into" the concept. The former was a given; the latter could be worked out through team and trust building activities. The teacher preparation program itself is outcome based so that the students were already required to show what they could do with what they know. Individual projects were a part of the assessment procedure. The shift from individual to group projects could be accomplished with ease once the students

accepted cooperative learning as a means for meeting their needs as lifelong learners.

Opportunities for cross-cohort informal gatherings, mentoring, study groups, celebrations, and reflective thinking are essential pieces of the community building puzzle. The literature provides evidence that these experiences help to increase the chances for a supportive peer culture to develop and for the perception of teaching as an individualistic, competitive enterprise to be allayed. A sense of history is established when students share and reflect upon experiences, interests, values, and strengths. Regard for both the individual and collective community develops. Out-of-class events will not just happen, but will require a conscious effort to bring them about. More than anything, time and creative scheduling are involved. The writer was assigned to teach two out of the four cohorts during the practicum implementation which made this solution attractive. There would be easy access to approximately one half of the students in the program which opened up an efficient channel of communication.

Description of Selected Solution

The literature deals mainly with research and models generated from K-12 investigations, and a synthesis of these served as the foundation for turning the writer's college classroom into a more holistic and constructivist atmosphere. Inasmuch as the writer had to follow an

already written college approved syllabus, autonomy was given to the students within a framework of flexible parameters and guidelines that allowed both the syllabus to be covered and student decisions to be made about when, where, why, and how well (Kohn, 1993a) to learn it. In addition, other actions were taken to create a democratic classroom based on choice and responsibility. A shared decision-making model was put in place and was driven by a mutually developed vision and mission for the course. At the same time, in order to move the students along a continuum of continuous improvement as the paradigm of community evolved, training in Covey's Principle-Centered Leadership occurred. A short class meeting was put on the agenda of each session to solve problems, share experiences, and encourage others in their undertakings. An alliance based upon warm relationships, mutual respect, shared responsibility, and altruism was actively worked on between teacher and students. To accomplish this, a schedule for student-instructor contacts outside of the classroom for informal discussions, tutoring, conversations, and feedback was offered. Opportunities for student choice in setting the criteria for grades, self-evaluating, and instruction were provided.

With the freshmen students in the lead, a Student Advisory Council was formed, and later combined with the

Sunshine Committee, in order to bring the cohorts in on the decision-making process at the institutional level. Such a Council put the writer in a position very much believed in; one of being a leader of leaders. It utilized a bottom-up model of decision-making which all the cohort students, as future teachers, would be a part of as schools restructured. The Council, therefore, served a dual purpose--student choice and exposure to the process. Two representatives from each of the clusters were elected to serve, and the writer facilitated. Opportunities for formative evaluations of the program were provided. Dialogue between administration and students occurred in order to increase understanding of multi-viewpoints and afford the students the chance to input into program matters.

The writer formed and trained cooperative learning groups in effective prosocial, leadership, planning, and evaluation skills. The literature supports a cooperative learning model as a means to enhance academic and social growth. The classroom was transformed from teacher-centered to student-centered, empowering the group to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning and to accept altruism as an alternative to egocentrism. The group was trained in facilitative communication and social skills in order to enhance discussion, listening, and encouraging. Alternative assessments were used and student-developed

rubrics set the evaluation criteria. A variety of cooperative learning strategies were introduced for developing group identity, collaboration, and collegiality and for modeling effective classroom practices. The students got involved in class projects (Projects Of Worth - POW), the success of which depended upon what was generated by each individual team. Cooperative learning and the skills it embraces moved the students away from a LOSE-WIN perspective on toward one that supported a WIN-WIN attitude. In this very supportive environment, learning and caring existed side-by-side.

The final solution was one that kept the learning community "coming together, keeping together, and learning together" (Peterson, 1993, p. 139). A cross-cohort Sunshine Committee was formed, and later combined with the Student Advisory Council, in order to provide opportunities for interactions among all the teacher candidates in the program which would help to create a strong peer culture that perceived teaching as a shared enterprise. A sense of history was established for the program. The freshman class served as the historians and kept a visual photo and video record of the events, rather than both visual and written. Reflection in a journal guided students toward assessing experiences and feelings as they moved toward a sense of "connectedness," belonging, and community.

Report of Action Taken

The practicum was implemented during an entire semester of a community college freshman teacher preparation seminar course in order to ensure that 12 out of the 16 weekly class sessions were specifically dedicated to practicum goals. Due to the field-based nature of the course, four sessions were delegated to field options and resource speakers in order to meet program guidelines. Providing for three months of consecutive in-class sessions was hampered by the schedules of the outside resources which made them unavailable after the practicum ended.

Implementation began with a meeting in the writer's home in order to set the groundwork for the cross-cohort aspects of the practicum. Volunteers from the freshman class, the other three college and university clusters, and the mentor teacher cadre were present. These individuals temporarily acted as representatives until the formal elections occurred. Preliminary dialog and discussion took place in reference to the formation of an Advisory Council and Sunshine Committee, election of representatives, commitment, and scheduling of meetings and gatherings.

Several concerns arose about the feasibility of having a separate Advisory Council and Sunshine Committee which meant bringing all representatives of the different cohorts together for meetings on the same days at the same time. It

was pointed out that schedules among the different cohorts varied greatly as to days, times, and meeting places of classes and that any open time blocks were generally used to meet field requirements or job commitments. Furthermore, the mentor cadre participant revealed that due to school and district commitments, the mentors would not attend committee meetings and requested information be sent via phone and the inter-district pony system. The meeting ended with the decisions to combine the Advisory and Sunshine into one group, to elect two representatives and two alternates from each cohort, and to address the problem of meeting times with the entire student body for their input.

The volunteers brought back the information to their peers, and the feedback was that the students and mentors saw both the Advisory and Sunshine as routes to improving communication and interdependence within the entire teacher preparation program and strongly supported the concept. Based upon their recommendations, the writer acted as the intermediary between cohorts and met separately with their representatives at or near the college or university at their convenience. It was possible, on two occasions, to gather all representatives together for a cross-cohort meeting.

Throughout the implementation period, class sessions integrated the regular curriculum of the seminar with those activities which were part of the solutions for achieving a

purposeful community of kind, caring, motivated, and interdependent learners. During the first session, the blueprints for the class structure over the practicum period were presented. These included introduction to the concepts of classbuilding, teambuilding, Class Meeting, class history, and community of learners. An icebreaker signaled the beginning of the class and served as a first step toward learning each others' names. All remaining sessions opened in this manner and served to enhance the networking among the students while at the same time, provided them with an excellent resource for developing a portfolio of activities promoting positive class climate to be used in their future classrooms. The very first task was to fill out the Fordham/Anderson Self-Evaluation of Participation Form (see Appendix A) in order to identify two areas in which they wanted to grow. Once identified, they wrote a measurable goal for each.

The students were next introduced to the purpose, structure, and guidelines of a Class Meeting. They developed an agenda which included the categories of announcements, program or class concerns, and field experience highlights. The format adopted continued throughout the practicum. The writer next suggested the idea of keeping a history of class events, and the rationale for doing this was elaborated. At this point, several possibilities for accomplishing this end were brainstormed

and by consensus, the group decided that photographs and videos provided the most objective data, were products which could be scanned into future computer presentations, and broke out of the boundaries of traditional written records. An historian, who acted as a leader for this class project, was chosen. At each session, he selected one team to man the cameras and capture important events within the classroom or at any outside functions during the week.

An activity designed to raise the students' awareness of the problem of a lack of community in schools, in general and in the seminar classes, in particular followed. The exercise required the students to form freely-selected groups of three or four which were disbanded after the activity. No prior instruction in cooperative learning or social and communication skills was given. Each group was charged with the task of creating the ideal college classroom in graphic form. The solutions were presented to the class and discussed. Since these were incoming freshmen, who had no prior college experience, the gap between the ideal and the reality was evaluated using their high school experience. Each student was then asked to take a few minutes to reflect upon his own behavior within the group and the group's overall effectiveness and describe each in one word. The responses for individual performance ranged along a continuum from non-participant to

overpowering; and for the group performance, from disorganized to chaotic.

During session two, some problems surfaced surrounding the Class Meeting. It lasted about 45 minutes rather than the designated 15, covered areas not on the agenda, became a personal "gripe" session for some, and was capitalized by a few speakers. We discussed the problem and, thereafter, used the elected Advisory/Sunshine representatives to head the meetings, a timekeeper to act as taskmaster, and a sign-up speaker sheet with a limit of three speakers per session. Additionally, the meeting time was shifted to the end of the class session. Once the Advisory/Sunshine Committee was in place, it served as an avenue for complaints, and class sharing time focused almost exclusively on the positive experiences of the students.

As a lead into preparing the students for their roles as active participants in their own learning, the writer presented the concept of shared decision-making, elaborated its components, and introduced some models. This content then became part of the process as the students were made aware of the Advisory/Sunshine Committee's function; elected representatives and alternates to serve on it; generated a vision and mission statement for the class which included goals, principles, beliefs, and values; and designed a syllabus for the course within given parameters.

There were four components of the vision and mission statement process which were specifically geared toward creating a shared sense of identity: education, personal vision, group vision, class vision. During the education phase, definitions were discussed and sample statements were examined. A variation of the Think-Pair-Square (Kagan, 1992) structure of cooperative learning was then used. The students thought about their own core values and beliefs in relation to the purpose and direction of an initial teacher preparation class, paired with others forming a team to further discuss and produce a consensus statement on their ideas and feelings, and then shared these with the class as a whole. Collectively, from the team statements, a paradigm evolved which set the tone for the now and the future of their seminar as they envisioned it.

The traditional syllabus contained seven major topic areas. The writer shared some recent research that suggested that students be given some choice in what they learned and what they learned be based on the principle that "less is more." They bought into these concepts and as a result, were asked to prioritize five of the seven syllabus topics on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the most wanted and 5 the least (see Appendix B). Two of the seven topics, which the writer viewed as essential, were eliminated from the free choice list. Their top three choices along with the two selected by the writer became the semester syllabus.

At the close of the session, and every forthcoming one, the students made entries into a journal reflecting upon the day's work and its application to their future teaching careers.

Session three opened up with the dissemination of copies of the vision and mission statements previously produced. The document was discussed, and no revisions were made. The writer conveyed to the students her desire to build a collegial relationship with them and presented a schedule of office hours for informal discussions, conversations, tutoring, and specific feedback. A poll was taken as to interest in meeting for lunch in order to enhance out-of-class contacts; and after the overwhelming positive response, three such meetings were scheduled during the practicum period.

The college students were then introduced to cooperative learning. The writer allowed time for the students to share feelings about the method which were based on their own previous personal experiences. The majority of the class had never participated in such groups, and those who had were overwhelmingly negative and cited having to carry members of their groups without any teacher support. The writer provided a rationale for the cooperative learning technique espoused by the experts and diffused concerns by answering predictable questions about its use. Much of the writer's information was adopted from Kagan's (1992)

research on the most frequent questions asked, the need for cooperative learning, and its positive outcomes.

The immersion approach to cooperative learning was explained, and all future course instruction was conducted in this format so that the students learned the strategies as they experienced the method. The very first use of this concept asked the students to form random groups based upon the color of a lollipop left on their desk. All the same colors joined together, worked on a task related to defining the different roles assigned to members of a cooperative group (i.e., encourager, praiser, gatekeeper, etc., Kagan, 1992), and shared the information gained with the class through a role play. The writer asked each team to reflect upon how well they performed as a group. They realized this would not very valid without setting criteria for evaluation. The writer then trained the students in the development and use of rubrics and they, in turn, designed the Reflection Rubric (see Appendix C) which was repeated as a social, communication, and thinking skills checker after each group encounter. The groups were disbanded after the activity.

By the fourth session, Class Meetings, a video and photo history, journal writing, cooperative learning groups and evaluation rubrics were all in place. Additionally, two separate Advisory/Sunshine meetings transpired during the

same period of time. One, which included the freshman and sophomore representatives, was held on the college campus for their convenience. The first cross-cohort mentee and mentor social gathering was planned, and study groups in math organized. The sophomore's raised a concern about their schedule for the spring semester which did not leave any blocks of time for work. The writer presented the information to the program director who appealed to the college. The problem was immediately acted upon and solved.

The second meeting, which gathered together the representatives of the junior and paraprofessional cohorts, took place at an area restaurant. The mentor-mentee social gathering was discussed, monthly class birthday celebrations proposed, recruitment and retention ideas generated, and a second trust and teambuilding out-of-class event suggested. Concerns over the traditional teaching styles of some of the instructors, lack of communication of instructors in reference to long-term projects, impersonal atmosphere in classes other than the seminars, and scheduling of classes on the same day at different campuses were brought up and delivered to the director. Those concerns within the circle of influence of the director were immediately taken care of.

Student effectiveness and leadership training using the Covey (1989) model of Principle Centered Leadership was the prime focus of the fourth session. The writer presented an overview of its philosophy and each one of the seven habits.

Long-term, permanent teams were formed based upon interest in a particular habit rather than upon such variables as gender, ethnicity, or ability as had originally been planned. The students were pretty much homogenous and predominantly female, elementary education majors, B and C students, and caucasian so that large differences were, therefore, not clearcut.

The Group Investigation design was combined with the Co-op Jigsaw strategy (Kagan, 1992) to enhance intra-team and inter-team cooperation. The philosophy of each approach was studied and practiced as each team simultaneously worked on becoming experts on their habit and on preparing a presentation for the whole class. While they met in their groups, the team members alternated the roles of recorder, gatekeeper, and taskmaster (Kagan) as mini-topics were assigned. To enforce the skills of equal participation, listening, and reflective thinking, the Think-Roundrobin (Kagan) strategy was explained, and its use required within the group situation.

The Advisory/Sunshine representatives ran the Class Meeting and delivered information for the good of the cause which included dissemination of a flyer in regard to the mentor-mentee social gathering and monthly birthday celebrations. Input from the class led to a veto of monthly celebrations in favor of one large party at semester's end. A committee was formed under the direction of the

representatives to handle the arrangements; and a picnic at an area park culminated their work.

A field experience option to a district school was scheduled between sessions four and five. The opportunity for an informal luncheon date presented itself; thus, we met at a nearby mall. At this time, the writer learned through conversation with one of the students that by week's end, she would be homeless. Time was limited so a "quick fix" was installed, counseling recommended, and scholarship money sought.

Many possibilities for the Seven Habits presentations emerged from the brainstorming activity of Session four. Session five was, therefore, the opportune time to bring up the concept of "quality" and the components which comprise such a work. A rubric was once again decided upon as a necessary structure for assessing a Project Of Worth (POW). While in their teams, the members generated criteria to be used as yardsticks in the evaluation process. These were shared whole class and by consensus, a Seven Habits Rubric (see Appendix D) to be used by self, peers, and instructor evolved. On-the-spot, as the groups were in progress, the instructor observed for specific social and prosocial skills and recorded their presence or absence on a Social Skills Checklist (see Appendix E). Feedback was given at a later date.

During the remainder of time assigned to the cooperative groups, the members practiced the social skill of perspective-taking, the communication skill of empathic understanding, and the thinking skill of brainstorming (Kagan, 1992) which were explained and modeled by the writer during a mini-lecture at the outset of class. The roles of recorder, praiser, and encourager (Kagan) were rotated and complemented the skills emphasized. The preparation of a schedule for team presentations was abandoned until a later session. The usual time was allotted for the Class Meeting, history gathering, teamwork assessment, and journal reflection.

By the sixth session, it became clear that more time was needed for perfecting group presentations and the learning of effective social, communication, and thinking skills, which were the pillars of building a class community. The students were overwhelmed by "doing things differently" and the new rules, roles, and responsibilities involved in being transformational and altruistic. The writer decided at this point to compact some of the preplanned practicum activities rather than jeopardize the continuation of a positive experience. Jointly, the writer and students prepared a more realistic calendar. A second long-term Project Of Worth was tabled, and some of its components incorporated into the Seven Habit presentations.

Within their groups, the students brainstormed ways to accomplish the integration and came up with a creative plan for spreading Covey's (1989) word to college-aged youth about how to be highly effective. These plans were presented to the class and through consensus, a combination of the many ideas generated led to presentations which merged Covey principles with creative "real-life" situation role-plays. The groups strove to be sensitive to the viewpoints of others, to resolve conflicts through discussion, and to be "playful" and risk-taking in their thinking (Kagan, 1992). The corresponding social roles of recorder, cheerleader, and appreciator (Kagan) provided the environment for increasing the group's successful functioning.

During office hours, several students shared a concern with the writer about individual member accountability within their groups which served as a warning sign that the family atmosphere necessary for teams "maximizing their potential" (Kagan, 1992, p. 4:2) was still shaky. Borrowing from Kagan's cooperative project principles, the "freeloader" and "workhorse" (Kagan, p. 15:2) syndromes were treated within session six and surfaced no more. This temporary roadblock was shortlived as some key concepts toward the attainment of positive cooperation and interdependence were looked at. Many students openly stated that a group grade was the main problem. Using

Kagan's (1992) research once again, the writer led a discussion on a variety of reward structures and defused concerns over between-team competition by setting a class score goal with the students based upon the points generated from the presentation rubric. Class recognition was the paradigm which replaced individual or group rewards, and celebration for success was scheduled for the end-of-semester picnic. Student journals were collected in order to check on the progress of the practicum goal and outcomes.

The next two seminar classes were not home-based at the college and were given over to field experience options. Another occasion for lunch presented itself, and the writer and students freely interacted with each other and spoke about academic problems at a nearby restaurant. Many reported they were in danger of "flunking" math, English, or both. Interventions were immediately determined: arrangements for study groups were made, tutoring from the mentor cadre was put in place, and meetings with their instructors recommended.

The mentor-mentee gathering finally came to fruition at this same time. In a relaxed, collegial atmosphere, members of the four different cohorts along with their mentors built friendly relationships as they indulged in home-made snacks and baked goods at the college's lake facility. A few days later, the cross-cohort Advisory/Sunshine Committee managed time together at a Regional Library. The juniors reported

making headway in personally communicating to their instructors their needs and concerns and extended their appreciation for having their ideas and input from their last meeting acted upon with such expediency. The freshmen requested input on how to interact with instructors who intimidated them, and they received immediate feedback from those present. Interest was high for scheduling the second cross-cohort event; and a workshop based upon experiential learning, adventure challenges, and cooperation was opted for. It became apparent that although the students wished the activity to cross over clusters, this was impossible because of school and work schedules. The alternative led to the selection of three different dates, including one during the practicum implementation period, and an open-ended invitation to students to attend at their convenience. This information was disseminated to all cohorts through the representatives.

Sessions seven, eight, and nine provided in-class time for preparation of group presentations. While in groups, many additional strategies favored by Kagan (1992) were utilized as a means for achieving synergy among participants. These included the social roles of coach, checker, reflector; social skills of helping, taking turns, waiting; communication skills of affirming, responding, and decision-making; and the higher level thinking skills. Progress reports on each of the Seven Habits presentations

were given by each group through the structure of Team Inside Outside Circle (Kagan, 1992) and suggestions for improvement were considered. The final presentations were scheduled for sessions 11 and 12.

On a continuing basis, during Class Meetings, the Advisory/Sunshine representatives reported back about concerns and upcoming gatherings, study group meetings, and tutoring sessions; the historian of the session kept a video and photograph account of happenings; the students acted as reflective practitioners as they recorded in their journals; and the groups evaluated their teamwork performance according to the Reflection Rubric (see Appendix C). A check of the record of complaints to the director was made during the week of session eight, and students' social and prosocial skills were observed and recorded on the Social Skills Checklist (see Appendix E) during session nine.

The third luncheon date, a field experience option, and another cross-cohort Advisory/Sunshine Committee meeting preceded session 10. During the interim between the Advisory/Sunshine meetings, a potential problem arose which could seriously handicap further dialog between the students and the institutions. The writer pointed out to the representatives that they needed to adopt a WIN-WIN position rather than a WIN-LOSE attitude in their negotiations with the college and university. They were telegraphing to them

the mindset of "My way, or no way!" Left to their own initiative, as a group, they agreed upon moving the rest of the student body in a more collaborative direction. The meeting ended on a positive note with another mentor-mentee gathering organized. However, the date requested by the mentors fell outside of the practicum implementation period.

During session 10 the freshmen, some members of other cohorts, and the writer participated in the first of the three scheduled teambuilding adventure programs. A freshman class session was selected in order to ensure total participation of the practicum students. All engaged in activities requiring group cooperation, communication, problem solving, and decision-making. Everyone had to be involved in the project, lose inhibitions, and build trust to guarantee a positive outcome. The facilitators of the workshop presented each activity and debriefed the group at its end so that insights and ideas were shared.

The last two sessions centered around the Seven Habits presentations and included the performances, questioning sessions, peer and writer feedback using the Seven Habits Rubric (see Appendix D), and self-evaluation. Some students, during the previous week's office hours, revealed that they were not confident that all students would separate their personal feelings and be objective in their assessments. This concern was brought before the class, and individual beliefs expressed. The overall consensus was

that this was not a problem; they were too positively involved with each other for it to be; and such behavior was inhumane. As a checks and balance procedure, the writer was asked to compare class evaluations with that of her own, which she did.

The final session was the "pièce de résistance" to the series of events that had been implemented during the practicum period. It was the time for the picnic and celebration of all achievements and successes. Acting in the capacity of leaders of leaders, the Advisory/Sunshine representatives took control and planned, organized, delegated responsibilities, and carried out the special day. The festivities resembled a "rites of passage" ceremony in the finest tradition. Family artifacts and personal anecdotes were shared; recipes for the desserts exchanged; and Country Western line dancing modeled and taught. For one last time, the groups met and recognized birthdays, sang holiday songs, and partook of a giant-sized cookie baked by one of the students. All these very special moments were caught on both video and 35mm camera to be shared with the other cohorts and the mentors at the next mentor-mentee gathering.

The last session also gave the writer the ideal opportunity to observe, interview, and assess in an informal, unstructured setting how the solutions implemented affected the students' attitudes toward community building

and life in their college seminar classroom. Additionally, the picnic environment provided a "real world" arena for determining whether there was transfer of the social and prosocial skills practiced within the cooperative learning groups of the classroom. Whenever these were noticed, they were recorded on the Social Skills Checklist (see Appendix E). After the teams were disbanded, one last entry into the journal was made before they were collected, and the college Student Opinion of Instruction (see Appendix F) administered. Back at the office, a second check of records of complaints to the director in reference to dissatisfaction with the program was made.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The students in the writer's freshman preservice teacher preparation seminar classroom were not a community of caring, interdependent, intrinsically motivated learners. The three "c's"-- collaboration, collegiality, and connectedness--were obviously absent, while the three "d's"--disinterest, diversity distrust, and disengagement were obviously present.

A multidimensional model incorporating a variety of solutions was put into use to "fix" the problem. The writer initiated shared decision-making, choice, and Class Meetings in order to enhance student autonomy; formed a cross-cohort Student Advisory/Sunshine Committee for the purpose of opening up communication; fostered a teacher-student alliance to encourage warm relationships; trained teams in cooperative learning techniques along with the complementary social, thinking, and communication skills to ensure group success; provided student effectiveness training; and developed a class history through videos and photographs.

Outcome #1 was that interviews and journal entries would show that five out of seven students would believe that a college classroom may be "family-like" where learning is a shared enterprise based upon mutual understandings and principles, honesty and trust, collegiality, unconditional

acceptance, and opportunities to fail "safely." This outcome was achieved to a greater degree than expected. The session six and session twelve journal checks yielded information which revealed that six out of seven students recognized the transformation of the seminar classroom into a community of learners. Their reflections indicated that they saw a need for fostering altruism, student autonomy, shared beliefs and values, and positive regard for others, and warm teacher-student relationships within the classroom; appreciated the opportunity to learn and practice strategies related to enhancing such behaviors; and intended to make these part of their own personal teaching repertoire. These same students recorded positive comments on an ongoing basis throughout their journals about their personal growth in three areas of the Anderson/Fordham Self-Evaluation of Participation (see Appendix A) relating to "family-like" behaviors: Community Building & Contribution to Learning Environment, Sensitivity to Others, and Commitment to Learning. The indirect, unstructured interview at the last session picnic celebration generated data which indicated that five out of seven students thought building a purposeful class community was especially important for college freshmen, had a lot to do with setting the stage for future college success, should be continued by the writer, and needed to be adopted by all instructors involved with the preservice preparation program. The college's

Student Opinion of Instruction questionnaire (see Appendix F), also administered during the last session, had seven out of seven students respond to questions about the writer's teaching strengths with comments generally associated with empathic understanding, altruism, and facilitative communication: "down-to-earth, caring, enthusiastic, involved, readily available for any of us, a teacher and a friend, cooperative, good listener, positive and inspirational, shows confidence in us, easygoing manner, approachable, supportive." In response to whether they felt comfortable in asking questions in class and seeking needed assistance outside of class, seven out of seven responded "yes." Additionally, all felt that their grade was determined in a "fair" or "more than fair" way.

Outcome #2 was that interviews and journal entries would reflect that 21 out of 21 students would have had representation and input on matters affecting their cohort such as scheduling and curriculum. This outcome was achieved. The student journals included references to the election of the Advisory/Sunshine Committee representatives, Class Meetings, syllabus choice, direct access to the director, and openness to next semester's scheduling suggestions. Student discussions during Class Meetings showed a positive attitude toward the student government, the open communication it fostered, the newfound

independence which resulted from making decisions and taking responsibility for them, and the increased comradery which came about through consensus building. The indirect, open question, structured interview at the last session generated data which indicated that all the students felt empowered by the two-way communication system that existed between themselves and the college through their Advisory/Sunshine representatives, their instructor, and the program's counselor and director.

Outcome #3 was that during on-the-spot, structured observations, two out of three students: would demonstrate an abundance mentality and be supportive of others in their learning; would be inner-directed learners; would be empathic listeners and genuine and honest communicators; would be respectful, culturally aware, and open to the viewpoints of others; would come from a WIN-WIN perspective; would know the basic attitudes and behaviors of cooperation, teamwork, social responsibility, and friendship. This outcome was achieved during the session nine and session 12 checks and was not achieved during the session five check where only one out of three demonstrated the social and prosocial behaviors being observed. As the students became more knowledgeable of the methods and strategies of cooperative learning, facilitative communication, and community building and continued to practice these during

class activities and out-of-class events, improvement in their social and prosocial behaviors occurred.

Outcome #4 was that no more than two complaints every month, for the first two months of the practicum implementation, would be received by the director about a lack of a strong peer culture existing among teacher candidates in the different cohorts or the absence of a sense of belonging. This outcome was achieved. Only one complaint dealing with this issue was received by the director during the time period used to measure the decrease. The Junior Cohort, through their Advisory/Sunshine Committee representatives, shared concerns about the impersonal atmosphere in some of their classrooms between student and student and teacher and student; the lack of communication among their instructors; and their feeling of isolation from the broader university campus life. Although many suggestions for handling these situations were made by the Advisory/Sunshine Committee to the Junior Cohort representatives, it was decided that the director needed to be apprised of the situation. Another check of records for complaints was done at the end of the practicum period although this did not fall within the measurement timeframe and revealed that a second one had been received from the Junior Cohort in reference to the formation of factions among the students. The juniors

formed an official club for future teachers through the ICC of the university. Elections were held, and the results divided the cluster into two different groups. Morale was very low resulting in misdirected anger against the pilot program itself. On the other hand, the freshmen were moving in the direction of a group of supportive and inner-directed learners with an increased sense of belonging and a strong desire to remain in the program.

Discussion

The writer attempted to emphasize the practical application of theory related to improving classrooms through building a community of learners. The results were concordant with those researchers who support the philosophy that building a community of learners is connected to a classroom atmosphere that encourages altruism, autonomy, authentic intellectual challenges, and synergy (Guskey, 1988; Kagan, 1992; Kohn, 1991, 1993a; Peterson, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1994).

The writer in initiating this practicum believed that the preservice teacher preparation students had already been scripted to teach in a very transactional way even though they had never passed through the myriad of required education courses. We tend to teach the way we have been taught; and on the whole, the freshmen had been schooled according to the traditional factory and assembly line paradigm stressing competition, individualism, and

isolation. However, according to Covey (1989), habits are not easily broken, but if scripted once, possibility thinking suggests why not a second time in a more proactive way. As the writer presented the lingo "shared identity, "shared vision," "shared mission," "shared goals, values, and principles," "shared responsibility," "shared projects," initial acceptance varied among the students. Yet, once involved in the actual experience of creating synergy through authentic and meaningful encounters, bonding and interdependence were not only positively received by the students, but were enjoyed and openly sought.

The classroom became more and more democratic as the students got in tune to what they were thinking and feeling and defined group beliefs and a shared vision and mission. The sense of purpose which they wished to guide them had three elements: "A familylike environment where the class works to develop caring relationships between all parties; an interactive environment where there is a commitment to help each other through constructive feedback and support; an interdependent environment where everyone accepts personal responsibility for the group's performance." These statements created a "living" document--not just a piece of paper generated from a one-time passing activity--of shared principles and values to which students and the instructor were committed throughout the semester. According to Peter Senge (1990), "You cannot have a learning organization

without shared vision. Without a pull toward some goal which people truly want to achieve, the forces in support of the status quo can be overwhelming" (p. 208).

Initiating cooperative learning in a classroom where the majority of students had never been trained to work as a unit was a significant task. Some immediately challenged its use and said:

> Who is Carol [the writer] to tell us who to be friends with or work with?
>
> I hate working in groups since I always seem to end up doing most of the work.
>
> Group grades are unfair, especially, when you get a "dodo" to work with.
>
> What's wrong with lectures? I don't have the time to learn all the stuff on my own.

Others had personalities and attitudes which adjusted well to a paradigm shift to group functioning. The writer believed that it was more natural to cooperate than to work independently and that effective collaboration was based upon specific social and prosocial skills. As the students were immersed in both the theory and practice of cooperative skills, they grew toward a community of learners truly interested in both the academic and personal lives of others. There was positive support from peers in the form of friendships, study groups, tutoring, tolerance, respect, and collaboration. Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, and

Roy (1984) view the skills of collaboration as pillars to learning and state that without "some skill in cooperating effectively, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to maintain a marriage, hold a job, or be part of a community, society, and world" (p. 52).

Although three of the students remained unhappy about the new system and some others felt phony and uncomfortable applying the cooperative skills before their peers, they did not block any attempts to create an altruistic classroom culture. The positive interdependence that resulted from coordinating efforts intra- and inter-group to bring to fruition the Seven Habits cooperative project led to many unanticipated outcomes. The various talents and intelligences of the students were recognized, utilized, and applauded by their own peers. An increased sense of self-confidence, accountability, task commitment, and morale led to a decrease in absenteeism. The students set high standards for themselves, and the presentations met the highest expectations and exhibited evidence of high level thinking. Such results follow Bellanca's and Fogarty's (1991) research which demonstrated that a positive relationship does exist between cooperative learning and the ability to do critical and creative thinking as valuing, perspective taking, consensus building, and conflict resolution are engaged in.

The writer was uncertain at the outset as to how much influence one class and one instructor "doing business in a different way" would have on students in college. Throughout the practicum period, the crucial role played by an instructor involved with first semester college students in affecting their overall attitude toward the college experience and even their motivation to continue was brought to the surface. The most significant factor which made the difference in the teaching and learning process within the writer's classroom evolved from the warm relationships developed with the students through informal lunches, office hour discussions, and out-of-class meetings. These findings were consistent with those of Guskey's (1988) which suggested that such factors as mutual respect, immediate and specific feedback, and formal and informal contact enhanced the effectiveness of the instructor, student, and academic classroom environment.

A spin-off of this more personal involvement with the students was that the writer was thrown more and more into an advisory role without any sort of training for it. Motivation and success within the classroom were greatly impacted by what was happening in the personal lives of the students. Although great effort was put into trying to keep individual student discussions within the realm of academics, personal problems frequently emerged. The dilemma this created was that on the one hand, it was

rewarding to be able to guide the students toward the proper interventions--a homeless girl placed in a supportive facility, additional scholarship money for a potential program dropout, counseling services for another extremely stressed; on the other hand, their great needs were emotionally draining and required hours of time outside of the regular school day--evening telephone calls, emergency off-campus meetings.

As students accepted their newfound autonomy brought about through Class Meetings, choice within the classroom, and the Advisory/Sunshine Committee, customer satisfaction also increased. A direct result was that concerns and complaints, which were more often than not minor, were diffused and resolved by the students themselves before ever going to the director. However, several unexpected challenges did arise. Student attitudes began to take on a WIN-LOSE perspective in dealing with the institutions; Class Meetings shut down rather than opened up two-way communication at times; a separate Advisory Council and Sunshine Committee, or for that matter regular cross-cohort meetings, were not feasible due to varying class schedules and work commitments; and gatherings and social events had to be kept to a minimum because of the extensive time involved in their planning.

The good news was that because the students appreciated the independence and benefits reaped from a school setting

that departed from traditional norms and gave them the opportunity to be connected in a way they had not previously experienced, they readily explored solutions to the problems. A balance of control and autonomy was established with a WIN-WIN position emphasized; the Advisory and Sunshine became one group with the writer acting as the intermediary between cohorts; Class Meetings took on a more positive focus as time parameters were set and agenda items made clear; and responsibilities were delegated to the various cohorts as events were planned and organized. Thus, bottom-up decision making and student autonomy continued to be nourished as several students emerged as leaders of leaders, study groups expanded and provided a foundation for successful academic achievement through mentoring and interventions, time was allotted for being reflective practitioners alongside more senior peers and mentor teachers, and a sense of belonging intensified through a shared history captured on video and photos.

The emergence of an atmosphere of trust where honesty, diversity, and risk taking were valued was especially evident as the three cohorts participated in the "Project Challenge" ropes course experience. Fears were overcome as team support, cooperation, and decision making carried the group through the successful completion of a variety of obstacles. Noteworthy, was how the freshman group acted

more and more in terms of the "we" rather than the "I." An even stronger peer culture was created as they moved out of the mindset of "us" meaning their immediate group and "them" meaning all other groups in the program. The freshman cohort actively worked toward becoming a cohesive and altruistic group as many opportunities were provided for them to become powerfully enabled through a shared vision of the future of their college classroom. Additionally, the writer graciously accepted her new role as motivator, guide, and model for the type of thinking and cooperation which would facilitate the desired change. This practicum had both vision and action, two ingredients which cleared the pathway for significant success; for as Barker (1990, video) so aptly put it:

> Vision without action is merely a dream;
> Action without vision just passes the time;
> Vision with action can change the world.

Recommendations

The writer has five recommendations which might benefit others who wish to replicate this model:

1. In order to build a community of learners which is long-lasting, authentic, and representative of true change, an entire school community (not just one class) must get involved. There must be a shared vision that moves all stakeholders to commit to a "family-like" structure.

2. It is not possible in a single semester to remedy all the negative educational practices which have impacted entering college students' beliefs about learning, instruction, and classroom atmosphere. Need to be more realistic about what can be accomplished within the allotted time.

3. The multidimensional model incorporated too many solutions, too soon: student autonomy through shared vision and Class Meetings; teacher-student warm relationships through in-class and out-of-class interaction; improved communication through cross-cohort Advisory/Sunshine Committee and events; and increased collegiality and social skills through cooperative learning groups. Keeping the practicum class-based for three months and moving into the cross-cohort components for a future experience will yield more in-depth results.

4. There is a need for training college instructors, who are willing to develop warm relationships with students and have more personal involvement with them, as advisers and counselors.

5. In a college course which might meet only once-per-week for three or four hours and where the emphasis is on positive expectations and outcomes for all, preplanned quality instruction must integrate community building activities across the total curriculum to maximize time use and student involvement.

Dissemination

Because of the positive results of the college classroom community of learners model, the writer has laid out several strategies for the dissemination of the practicum. Two colleagues, who also teach the pilot program's seminar courses and interact with the preservice students several times during the four-year span of their schooling, have shown a very high level interest in actively creating a "family-like" atmosphere within their own classrooms. They will be given copies of the practicum, and the writer will act as their support system as they begin to implement it.

A second audience, the Executive Committee of the experimental program which is made up of public school system, college, university, and community representatives meets each month to formatively evaluate the program's implementation and outcomes and to share new ideas and concerns. The writer plans to be a part of the agenda of one such meeting introducing the group to the most recent literature on community building, sharing the results of the practicum, and disseminating an abstract of the experience. Additionally, a copy of the entire practicum will be given to each of the representatives from the three institutions (public school system, college, and university) for placement in their school's professional libraries.

Another group the writer wishes to impact is the community of college and university instructors and professors working with the cohort students in the required subject areas needed for obtaining a degree. This is a more difficult audience to reach, but the writer intends to offer a workshop at the close of the spring semester.

Finally, the writer intends to sharpen the ideas and philosophy which serve as the underlying principles for the college classroom model espoused in the practicum, to use student feedback to improve any weaknesses, to replicate it several more times with other groups of students, and then to publish an article on the experience.

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APPENDIX A

SELF-EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION

SELF-EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION

At course beginning: Identify two of the following categories as areas in which you particularly want to grow. Set one measurable goal for each. Write them on the back of this page. Be prepared at course end to state how you have made progress toward these goals and to cite specific examples of how you have grown.

At course end: After reflecting upon each statement below, use the following rating scale to tell how closely the statement describes your participation in the class. Note your response in the space provided and make any comments next to the appropriate item (continuing as needed on the back) that will better explain your participation: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), U (uncertain), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree)

____ • **Attendance.** I was present for all, or nearly all, class sessions. Any absences were unavoidable and were explained to the professor. When absent I made every effort possible to learn about what went on. Nevertheless, I am aware that absences for whatever reason have a negative impact upon participation.

____ • **Promptness.** I was almost always on time for the beginning of class, in my seat and ready to begin when the professor was. When late, I always checked with the professor after class to explain and to assure that I was not inadvertently marked absent.

____ • **Community Building & Contribution to Learning Environment.** I assumed my share of responsibility for building a community of learners and assisted others in attaining individual and class learning goals. Other students learned more in this class because I was part of it. I was warm, pleasant and affirming to others.

____ • **Contribution to Class Discussions.** I regularly completed the assigned readings and shared my insights with others during class sessions. Moreover, I made positive comments in response to the contributions of others.

____ • **Listening.** I was alert and listened attentively during all class sessions trying to make connections with my prior knowledge. I listened carefully to all others refraining from talking while they were. Moreover, I gave exclusive attention to the concerns of this class during scheduled sessions.

____ • **Sensitivity to Others.** I encouraged others to participate and let them know that their contributions were valued. Generally during any class or small group session, I did not speak more than twice before everyone else in the group had spoken at least once.

____ • **Commitment to the Learning Process.** Others could easily tell from my body language and demeanor in this class as well as from my display of genuine enthusiasm that I was curious, questioning, conscientious, and eager to learn.

____ • **Growth in Group Process Skills.** Early in the course I identified_____ from the seven categories above as the one area in which I particularly wanted to grow. I set measurable goals, have made significant progress and can cite specific examples of how I have grown in this area. Please explain this.

As best as I can recall, I was absent from class for ____ meetings and I was late for ___ meetings. In view of all the above, I believe that I deserve credit for _____ of the 20 participation points.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Anderson and Fordham
Permission granted on September 25, 1993

APPENDIX B

SYLLABUS

EDF 1003-CHOICE OF TOPICS FOR SYLLABUS 71

Directions: Rate topics two through six on a scale of 1 to 5: (1 most preferred; 5 least preferred)

_X__ 1. Introduction to Teaching, TEA, and Professionalism Code of Ethics, Professionalism, Attendance Policy, Develop goals, new role of teacher, needs of children in aftercare, Field Options: Country Isles Aftercare - Randy Rollins
NEED 2 SESSIONS **INSTRUCTOR CHOICE**

___ 2. Introduction to Philosophiues of Education and Teaching Styles: "The Truth About Teachers" - Whoopi; Zinn Philosophy Inventory; Gregorc; Presentation on video or book about a teacher and teaching
NEED 4 SESSIONS

___ 3. Introduction to Learning Styles, Time Management, and Classroom Management: Stu Greenberg, Managing Acting Out Behavior, CLIP Workshop; Learning Styles Inventory; Effective/Ineffective strategies
NEED 2 SESSIONS

___ 4. Introduction to Multicultural Education: Rafá,Rafá - components of a culture; Create own culture; Share an artifact; ESOL; Trends and Issues
NEED 4 SESSIONS

____ 5. Introduction to School Culture and System Structure New rules, roles, relationships; School Board; Departments; After-school care; Meet Your Mentor; Goals 2000; Blueprint 2000; Broward's ? (New Name); Katzenmeyer, Reinventing the Schools of Tomorrow; Field Experience Options: Schools that "Do it Differently" -- Country Hills (whole language, looping, Techie Team); Riverglades (shelve the books, cooperative learning, projects, performance based assessment); Hawkes Bluff (Josten's Lab) **NEED 4 SESSIONS**

____ 6. **Study Skills Strategies and Tutoring Techniques:** Goal setting; time management systems; Learning Style Inventory; Study skills/Tutoring theory and Practice; Communication Jammers
NEED 3 SESSIONS

_X__ 7. **Leadership Training: Covey, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**; Habit Presentations; Cooperative Learning; Social Skills; Character Education and Altruism; Joel Barker (visionary): Videos, "The Business of Paradigms" and "The Power of Vision" **NEED 4 SESSIONS** **INSTRUCTOR CHOICE**

EDF 1003 **Course Syllabus** - Credit Hours 3
Fall 1994

Instructor: Carol Cohen

The following syllabus was generated by both the instructor and students. The instructor selected two topics which would be covered and were not open to choice to the students. The students were given choice on five other topics which were presented and explained. Each student rated these with a 1 through 5 score (1 being the most preferred and 5 being the least preferred). A tally of all votes was then taken with:

1 equal to 5 points
2 equal to 4 points
3 equal to 3 points
4 equal to 2 points
5 equal to 1 point

INSTRUCTOR'S TWO CHOICES:

1. Introduction to TEA, Teaching, and Professionalism: Code of Ethics, attendance policy, develop goals, new role of teacher, needs of children in aftercare, Field Options: Country Isles Aftercare - Randy Rollins
   NEED 2 SESSIONS

2. Leadership Training: Covey, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People; habit presentations; cooperative learning, social skills, altruism, and paradigms
   NEED 4 SESSIONS

Total Number of Sessions needed: 6 Sessions

STUDENTS' TOP THREE CHOICES:

1. *FIRST CHOICE (73 points):* Number 3--Introduction to Learning Styles, Time Management and Classroom Management: Managing Acting Out Behavior, CLIP Workshop; Learning Styles Inventory; effective/ ineffective strategies; *(New)Physical Education Workshop
   NEED 3 SESSIONS

2. *SECOND CHOICE (59 points):* Number 2--Introduction to Philosophies of Education and Teaching Styles: "The Truth About Teachers" - Whoopi Goldberg; Zinn Philosophy Inventory; Gregorc; presentation on video or book about a teacher and teaching
   NEED *(New) 3 SESSIONS (Originally called for 4)

3. *THIRD CHOICE (57 points):* Number 5--Introduction to School Culture and System Structure: new rules, roles, relationships; School Board; departments; after-school care; meet your mentor; Goals 2000, Blueprint 2000; Blueprint: Broward Schools of Excellence; Katzenmeyer, Reinventing the Schools of Tomorrow; Field Experience Options: Schools that "Do it Differently" -- Country Hills (whole language, looping, Techie Team); Riverglades (shelve the books, cooperative learning, projects, performance based assessment); Hawkes Bluff (Jostens Lab)
NEED 4 SESSIONS

Total number of sessions needed: 10 sessions

IF BY ANY CHANCE THE ALLOTTED AMOUNT OF SESSIONS ARE NOT NEEDED, THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WILL ALSO BE COVERED:

4. *FOURTH CHOICE (53 points):* Number 6--Study Skills Strategies and Tutoring Techniques: goal setting; time management systems; study skills/tutoring theory and practice; Communication Jammers
NEED 3 SESSIONS

5. *FIFTH CHOICE (43 points):* Number 4--Introduction to Multicultural Education: Rafa, Rafá - components of a culture; create own culture; share an artifact; ESOL; trends and issues
NEED 4 SESSIONS

APPENDIX C

REFLECTION RUBRIC

REFLECTION RUBRIC

Team Members: _____ _____

_____ _____

Evaluator: _____

	SELF		TEAM	
	Congrats	Keep Trying	Congrats	Keep Trying
1. Participation				
2. Communication				
3. On Task Behavior				
4. Collegiality				
5. Support and Caring				
6. WIN-WIN Attitude				
7. Consensus Building				
8. Trust and Respect				
9. Problem Solving				
10. Decision making				

Select a color which describes how your group functioned today. Explain.

APPENDIX D

SEVEN HABITS RUBRIC

SEVEN HABITS RUBRIC - WE STRIVE FOR QUALITY
Evaluators:

	Congrats	Keep Trying
1. DEMONSTRATION CONTENT		
A. Objectives defined		
B. Organized and well-planned		
C. Clearly communicates info.		
D. Important terms defined		
E. Purpose achieved		
2. PERFORMANCE - DELIVERY		
A. Voice		
B. Creativity		
C. Vocabulary		
D. Eye Contact		
3. PERFORMANCE - VISUALS		
A. Handouts		
B. Summary		
C. Overheads, posters, etc.		
4. PERFORMANCE - Q & A		
A. Comfort level		
B. Knowledge		
C. Thoroughness		

5. COMMENTS:

6. OVERALL RATING:

TOTAL NUMBER OF AREAS EVALUATED: 15

NUMBER OF CONGRATS: _____

NUMBER OF KEEP TRYING: _____
CONGRATS: Quality 13-15; Almost There 10-12; 0-9 Not Yet

APPENDIX E

SOCIAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

SOCIAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

DATE: _____

OBSERVER: _____

SKILLS:

1. Helping
2. Supporting
3. Affirming
4. Respecting
5. Cooperating
6. Empathic listening
7. Honest communicating
8. Perspective taking
9. Decision-making
10. WIN-WIN attitude

	NUMBERS OF SKILLS BEING OBSERVED									
STUDENTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A.										
B.										
C.										
D.										
E.										
F.										
G.										
H.										
I.										
J.										
K.										
L.										
M.										
N.										
O.										
P.										
Q.										
R.										
S.										
T.										
U.										

APPENDIX F

STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION

AND PERMISSION TO USE

BROWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs
A. Hugh Adams Central Campus • (305) 475-6513

TO: Carol Cohen
TEA, Central Campus

FROM: Mont Smith
Dean of Academic Affairs
Central Campus

DATE: November 30, 1994

RE: Permission to use Broward Community College Student Opinion of Instruction form

MEMORANDUM

Permission is granted to Carol Cohen to use the Student Opinion of Instruction form as an evaluation instrument for her practicum. All results personally belong to her as the instructor of the seminar course.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BROWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION

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DIRECTIONS: This is an opportunity for you to express some of your personal views about this class and your instructor. If this questionnaire is going to be meaningful, you will have to respond honestly and in as much detail as possible. Your responses could have a very positive impact on improving instruction. You do not need to sign this form even though your instructor will not receive these evaluations until after the term is over.

INSTRUCTOR _____ COURSE _____

TERM _____ YEAR _____ TIME/DAY _____

1. Did you receive the following? (Mark X by your answer.)

YES	NO			WAS IT CLEAR	WAS IT UNCLEAR
___	___	A.	Course syllabus	_____	_____
___	___	B.	Course objectives	_____	_____
___	___	C.	Grading procedure	_____	_____
___	___	D.	Attendance policy	_____	_____

2. How would you evaluate the following?

   A. The instructor's preparation for class.

   B. The instructor's preparation of instructional material.

   C. The examinations (tests, graded papers) in this course.

   D. The assignments in this course.

3. How do you feel about the way your grade is being determined in this class?

(OVER)

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4. What are the instructor's teaching strengths, if any?

5. What are the instructor's teaching weaknesses, if any?

6. Would you recommend this instructor to another student needing the same course?

7. Do you feel comfortable enough to ask questions in class and/or seek needed assistance outside of class?

8. What grade do you expect to receive in this course? _____

9. What is your overall evaluation of this instructor?

_____ Superior (One of the best)

_____ Above average (Better than most)

_____ Average (About as good as the others)

_____ Poor (Much worse than most)

10. Additional comments:

Retained by instructor after completion of term.
Revised 11/91